INJURED INNOCENCE;

OR,

VIRTUE IN DISTRESS,

AN

AFFECTING NARRATIVE,

FOUNDED ON FACTS,

CONTAINING THE

MEMOIRS

OF

MISS ADAMS AND LORD WHATLEY.

By His LORDSHIP'S CHAPLAIN.

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INJURED INNOCENCE:

OR

VIRTUE in DISTRESS.

LORD Whatley's diſpoſition was naturaly good; but the thoughtleſs period of two-and-twenty, wealth, birth, and bad company; together with the facility of boundleſs gratification; all equally deſtructive of reaſon and ſentiment, had overborne the voice of nature; that guardian voice, which, whenever we attend to it, calls us to the paths of truth: in ſhort, Whatley had all that was politely careleſs, or agreeably extravagant; and the foundation of the whole was a very fine eſtate in the county of Salop.

Sir Thomas Ward was his favourite: that gentleman had an engaging addreſs, and a ſeductive wit: he was a moſt powerful advocate for pleaſure, for he had the art of giving a prevailing charm to every ſubject he undertook to defend. He, therefore, found no great difficulty in making a diſciple of Whatley: a young mind is ſubſervient to the ſenſes, and eaſily yields to every flattering overture.

Lord Whatley, after having been agreeably entertained at dinner with his companions, his head full of voluptuous images, walking alone in one of the vistas of his park. It led him, inſenſibly, to the houſe of one of his tenants, whoſe name was Adams: he went in: the whole family expreſſed their pleaſure on being honoured with ſuch a viſit. The honeſt farmer preſented his children

to his Lordſhip. 'Behold, my Lord,' (ſaid he) the effects 'of your goodneſs; I have brought up theſe children 'to love and ſerve you, while, for my own part, I ſhall 'evermore retain the moſt profound reſpect and gratitude.' This intereſting old man expreſſed himſelf with that heart-felt emphaſis which forms true eloquence: having been originally intended for the church, he had his education at Oxford, where he had ſtudied with unuſual proficiency; ſome unexpected misfortunes had changed, his deſign; but he had talents which might give dignity to any ſtation.

Lord Whatley was ſtruck with the figure of a girl who ſeemed to be about ſixteen, and was one of the farmer's younger daughters. The dignity of her mind was diſplayed in her countenance, and modeſty gave a deeper bluſh to the roſes on her cheek. Suffice it to ſay, that it was impoſſible to look upon her, without two ſentiments that carried away the heart; that is, admiration, and the whole energy of love. The latter ſoon made its inroads on the heart of this young Lord.

When Fanny ſpoke, every word went to the ſoul of Whatley, and completed her conqueſt. He would have laid his commands on Adams, but he was no longer the Lord, the maſter of Fanny, the farmers' daughter. He let fall ſome broken expreſſions, Fanny had confuſed him.

Returning to his companions, ſmitten to the ſoul! --'Ah! my friend,' ſaid he, 'it is over with me, I am no longer myſelf; I have beheld beauty, virtue, love, I have ſeen the everlaſting miſtreſs of my heart!' 'But pray,' ſaid Sir Thomas, with an arch ſmile, 'who may this adorable creature be?' -- 'It is Fanny, the daughter of my tenant; but formed to be a queen, the ſovereign of the univerſe, a godeſs!' 'A peaſant's daughter! replied the Baronet. My dear Lord, you are moſt extravagant; this is the genuine language of romantic love. Your lover's heaven never wants a ſuply of goddeſſes; all, all are divinities there!

'No more of your trifling, Sir Thomas; it is impoſſi-'ble for you to judge of my paſſion; you have not ſeen 'its object. Angelic creature! what a ſhape! what a 'voice! oh! my friend, how ſhall I bear this ſevere 'ſtroke! how poſeſs my Fanny? if not I die. 'What is it you ſay? die! die if you do not poſeſs

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'your tenant's daughter, your dependant, your ſervant! 'my dear Whatley, your head is turned. What hinders 'you to gratify yourſelf? Speak, command, ſend for 'her, ſhe is but too happy to pleaſe you.

'By my ſoul, my Lord, this love makes ſtrange metamorphoſes: why you are got into a ſtrain that I would not pardon in an Iriſh fortune-hunter that was making his addreſſes to ſome well-jointured widow. How—but you muſt be in jeſt—can you ſuppoſe that Fanny is a gem that is not to be purchaſed? Money, my dear Whatley, money! Adams will be extremely obliged to you—and little Fanny, do you think that ſhe will be much diſturbed with ſuch kind of people?'—'Sir Thomas,' replied his Lordſhip, 'your wit overbears your reaſon: theſe are the very people that have virtue, and Adams will not proſtitute his own and his daughter's honour for money. No, I will not wound the heart of a father. How could I preſume to make ſuch a propoſal? Fanny! I muſt forget her, my friend; I love her already ſufficiently to reſpect her.'

The Baronet interrupted him with a burſt of laughter. 'Come, my friend,' ſaid he, 'take courage: when was love unattended by hope?

Adams had given his daughter an excellent education, and ſhe was named as an example of prudence and politeneſs throughout the whole neighbourhood.

One of her relations, Miniſter of a neighbouring pariſh, had taken a pleaſure in forming and embelliſhing her mind; and to him ſhe was indebted for attainments far above her years. The precepts of the Miniſter had not, however, prevented her from diſcovering that ſhe had a heart. The ſight of our young Lord convinced her of it at once. He frequently repeated his viſit to the farmer, or rather to his daughter; and ſhe every time made a new impreſſion on him. He became penſive, melancholy; the whole artillery of the Baronet's humour was played upon him in vain: it could not baniſh that delightful penſiveneſs which for ever carried his heart towards the amiable daughter of Adams.

Fanny, one day, preſented him with a noſegay. 'My Lord,' ſaid ſhe, bluſhing,' 'I could wiſh theſe flowers were better: I gathered them on purpoſe for your Lordſhip.' 'Flowers from your hand, moſt beautiful Fanny, replied his Lordſhip, 'muſt always be acceptable.' This compliment

compliment, or rather real expreſſion of what he felt, ſoon found its way to Fanny's heart. Her fine complexion aſſumed a deeper bluſh. Her parents had not heard the anſwer his Lordſhip made her. Upon his return home, he gave the flowers a thouſand kiſſes. The Baronet did not fail to treat him like a Celadon, or an Artamenes. 'My dear friend,' ſaid he, 'you muſt certainly have read thoſe piteous French romances. You muſt never ſhew your Face in London, you will be pointed at as you go along the ſtreet. I thought you would have made an incomparable Lovelace, but you are a Menalcas by a fountain's ſide.'

Sir Thomas accompanied his friend to the farmer's. He ſaw Fanny. Hhe was diſconcerted; he had need of the whole force of his wit and humour to defend himſelf againſt the ſtroke that had wounded Whatley. He intends to addreſs himſelf in the language of the town to the reſpectable villager. She ſpeaks. He is in confuſion. At length, however, he reſumed his pleaſantry. Withdrawing to have ſome private converſation with Adams, the old worthy man returns, lifting up his eyes to heaven, diſtracted, pale, ready to ſink into the ground, death in his countenance. 'Go, my children.' Ah! my Lord,' throwing himſelf, with folding hands and ſtreaming eys, at the feet of Whatley, 'what have I done, that you 'have ſworn my ruin and diſgrace? That gentleman,' ſaid he, 'my dear' (addreſſing himſelf to his wife, and pointing to the Baronet,) 'has offered me 'money to give up Fanny to my Lord. No, my Lord, 'do not think us capable of proſtituting our dear child! 'take our lives, but leave us our honour, it is the only 'poſſeſſion we have. Are we then no longer worthy to 'be your ſervants? You ſeem diſturbed my Lord. You, 'then had no ſuch deſign: it is you, Sir, who have given 'his Lordſhip ſuch counſel as this. Alas! what would 'my Lord his father have ſaid? he treated us like his 'children.' 'My dear Adams,' interrupted Whatley, 'I never had any ſuch horrid idea. This is the inſuffer-'able pleaſantry of my friend. Set your heart at eaſe.' 'Certainly, my Lord, (anſwered he) I never could ap-'prehend that you ſhould ſo far forget your former good-'neſs to the grateful creatures that are always bleſſing you. As to you Sir, ſaid he, turning to Sir Thomas, 'I muſt 'tell you, that if theſe are your pleaſantries, they are very

'very vile ones; we may be poor, but we have a ſenſe 'of honour as well as you. 'If one of my equals,' added he, with a voice choaked up with grief, 'had made me ſuch an infamous propoſal, ſhould have gone to thoſe extremities which now have been prevented by reſpect.' 'I tell you once more my dear Adams, my friend did not mean to inſult you, he was only in jeſt, I aſk your pardon for him.

'Do you aſk pardon for me?' ſaid Sir Thomas,---Undoubtedly,' ſaid his Lordſhip, 'and you ought to aſk it of the meaneſt perſon you have offended; then he is our maſter. How cruel to be the occaſion of my ſufferings! You have offended the father of my Fanny.'

I have deſcribed Whatley as one of thoſe young Lords that conceal all their defects under the varniſh of politeneſs. I am not now inconſiſtent: but love works miracles. It had made of a frivolous and inſolent Lord, a timorous and reſpectful lover; and had opened his mind to the influence of virtue. The complaints of poor Adams had vexed him, and Sir Thomas muſt have been connected with him in the cloſeſt intimacy, as the conduct of that worthleſs man of faſhion was not followed by an open rupture.

Whatley was diſtreſſed. He loved Fanny, yet did not dare to ſee her. He was equally afraid of ſeeing the father and the daughter. His friends dragged him to London, and plunged him once more in all thoſe faſhionable follies and extravagancies which the world calls pleaſures.

Adams from that moment had loſt that chearfulneſs which is the happy portion of the inhabitants of the country. He was not ſatisfied with Lord Whatley's promiſes. He looked upon his daughter's growing beauties with a ſigh, and the tear was ſometimes ready to overflow the eye-lid.

'My dear father,' ſaid Fanny, 'may I aſk you the reaſon why you appear ſo ſad? I have obſerved that for ſome time your looks have often been fixed on me; and you ſhed tears: Can I have given you, my tender parent, any reaſon to be diſſatisfied? will you no longer love your poor Fanny? 'Child, obſerve what I ſay, and anſwer me ingenuouſly.' 'Indeed, dear ſir, I have always ſpoke the truth to you.'

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'Tell me then, what are your ſentiments of my Lord? what do you think of him? ſpeak the truth.' 'I think, father,' ſaid ſhe, with bluſhing cheeks and down-caſt eyes, 'that he is very amiable, do you not think the ſame?' 'My dear Child, you muſt learn to know men. This Lord, whom you think ſo amiable, would have brought me and your poor mother with ſorrow to the grave: would have deprived me of all that I hold moſt dear: Of my beloved Fanny!' 'Sir! what is it you ſay?' 'He would, my dear child, (claſping her to his boſom, and bathing her with his tears) he would have diſhonoured me, would have taken you for the indulgence of a licentious paſſion—for his miſtreſs.' Upon this he ſunk down into the arms of his daughter. 'Heavens! what horrid wretches are men! who could have thought this of my Lord?' 'Take care, my dear Fanny,' reſumed the father, 'take care of the ſnare that may be laid for you. Receive no letters from my Lord; never be a moment alone; be always, if poſſible, in the boſom of your father and your mother. Remember that the greateſt of all poſſeſſions is innocence.'

Fanny wept. 'No, my worthy father, no, you ſhall never have reaſon to bluſh for me. I did not apprehend any thing like this from my Lord. What a barbarous man to diſturb our happineſs! O that he may never come here.' 'Gratitude and reſpect p my child, are due to him; and it will be your duty to obſerve a profound ſilence, only be directed by my advice.'

His idea, nevertheleſs, was ſtill with Fanny; and, poſſibly, ſhe partook of the impreſſion he had made. Her lover, in vain, had recourſe to the diſſipation of his former amuſements. He had received a wound that the art of London could not cure; every pleaſure yielded to the remembrance of Fanny; ſhe was in every ſcene, in every obeject; ſo that without waiting for the ſpring, he returns into the country.

He was no ſooner arrived at his eſtate, than he went to the houſe of his tenant. The timorous and reſpectful behaviour of love made him more amiable. Fanny would fain have perſuaded herſelf to look upon him with averſion, but he had acquired new charms.

One day he met Fanny at a little diſtance from the farm; ſhe appeared more beautiful, more engaging, than

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ever he had ſeen her. A well-fancied hat on her head, the neighbouring flowers that fell negligently by her ſide, her hair in a diſorder preferable to all the elegance of art, her heaving boſom, the tears that fell from her fine eyes upon the roſes in her cheeks, theſe were the circumſtances of that enchanting figure in which he then ſaw the miſtreſs of his ſoul. She was ſeated at the foot of a tree, and it was eaſy to perceive that her young heart laboured under ſome oppreſſive ſentiment. Whatley threw himſelf at her feet. 'In tears my ſweet angel!' ſaid he. At the ſame moment ſhe roſe, and cried, 'My Lord! He would have taken her hand; ſhe withdrew it haſtily, and would have forced herſelf from him and fled to the farm. 'No my divine creature, you will not leave me; what have I done, beautiful Fanny? What crime have I committed?' Ah! my Lord, leave me, let me fly to my Father; he has forbiden me to ſpeak to, or ſee you. It was very cruel, my Lord, added ſhe with tears, to think of taking advantage of our poverty; you have given great diſturbance to my father, and all my relations. I have not deſerved ſuch treatment from your Lordſhip.'

In pronouncing the laſt words, ſhe was advancing towards the farm houſe, his Lordſhip following her. 'Ah! Fanny, do not accuſe me; my friend alone ſhould bear the blame never had I ſuch an execrable thought; is it poſſible that I, who love you to deſtraction, ſhould treat you without reſpect?' He perceived Adams coming towards them with a look of anger intimating a deſign to reprove his daughter, Yes, my dear Adams, I will repeat it before you, and in the face of heaven, that I adore your charming daughter. She is virtue itſelf, dreſſed by the graces, and it is my pride to lay at her feet myſelf, my fortune, my honours and my heart.' Fanny bluſhed. She turned her eyes that were full of tears, on her lover, thought him leſs criminal than her father had repreſented him to be, and again caſt thoſe eyes on the ground. 'Yes, Adams, I declare it, Fanny has taught me that prejudice ſhould yield to reaſon, and now that I am in your houſe, before your wife and your children, I declare that I will marry her; that my name, my title, my fortune, and my whole ſoul ſhall be hers. Yes, Fanny, you ſee your lover and your husband at your feet.' 'What are you about, my Lord?' ſaid Adams, 'I am thoroughly ſenſible of your goodneſs, but, ignorant and artleſs as we are, we know

what is due to ourſelves. My daughter was not born to the dignity of Lady Whatley. No, my Lord, I will never agree that you ſhall marry beneath yourſelf; my wife, and Fanny herſelf, will be of the ſame opinion; and I have the honour in their ſtead, to point out to you what is your duty on this occaſion, and what is ours.' Fanny once more looked on Lord Whatley, and wept. 'Are not theſe, child, your ſentiments?' 'Yes, father,' ſaid ſhe; but that Yes was pronounced with a trembling accent; her heart would have ſnatched up what her tongue had let fall.

What a triumph for Fanny! ſhe loved Lord Whatley, and what ſecret tranſport muſt ſhe have felt to find his paſſion ſo great as to offer her marriage! Her lover did not let the thing reſt here; every day he viſited Adams. The ſame perſeverance of demanding Fanny in marriage on his part, and the ſame fortitude of refuſal on the worthy father's. My lord at length determined to write to the miſtreſs of his fate. He leaves the letter at the foot of a tree. He knew that Fanny muſt paſs this way, and depended on her curioſity for taking up the paper. On which he wrote no Superſcription, Fanny comes to the tree, beholds the billet, but is in doubt whether ſhe ſhould touch it. She proceeds without taking it up, looks back, returns to the place, yields to an involuntary impulſe, unfolds the paper, and trembling, reads the following addreſs:

You will eaſily diſcover who is the writer of this letter, and to whom it is addreſſed. It proceeds from the moſt tender and moſt paſſionate of men. It is addreſſed to the moſt adorable, but the moſt cruel, the moſt barbarous of women. Can the beautiful Fanny be ignorant, that the happineſs of Lord Whatley depends ſolely on herſelf, and her reſpectable father? I can only give her my hand and my heart; the ſacrifice is not ſufficient to expreſs my love. I know it well, my charming Fanny, but it is all that is in my power. If you loved me, if you had the leaſt ſenſe of pity for your unhappy Whatley, I ſhould be in heaven. The lover, the adorer of my divine Fanny would become her Huſband. But ah, cruel!--- Have I a ſigh that breaths not for you?--- and yet theſe ſighs muſt ſoon expire in death. Solicit your Father to make me happy. Believe that you will be the happieſt, the moſt adored of women. Virtue and Beauty level all diſtinctions. You have read Pamela: a woman like her in virtues and accomp'iſhments, ſhould, like her be diſtinguiſhed

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and rewarded. But ah, angelic creature! can it be an adequate recompence to you, to make you ſovereign miſtreſs of a man who has not the moſt diſtinguiſhed throne on earth to offer you? Your anſwer will determine whether Whatley ſhall end the moſt wretched of beings, or live the moſt happy of men.

Fanny kept the letter in her hand, peruſed it an hundred times, and always with the moſt ardent ſenſibility, with repeated exclamations of tender ſorrow. She conſiders whether ſhe ſhould ſhew it to her father. She is afraid by ſuppreſſing it. of breaking her promiſe. She ſees him, runs toward him, and with tears that interrupted her voice, ſhe cried, 'Take it, father, ſee here a letter from my Lord, which I have found. Poor Lord!—he is very unhappy. If he ſhould die?'——

Adams read the letter. 'Fanny, you never concealed any thing from me. Do you love my Lord?' She ſobbed violently. 'My dear child, you have told me all; you are not in the hands of a ſevere judge, inveſted with paternal authority, but of a tender friend. What do you expect from this unhappy paſſion? your honour is dear to you,' 'Oh, Sir, a thouſand times more than my life.' 'Well, and could you ever flatter yourſelf with being Lady Whatley? Would you have me take advantage of a moment of weakneſs or illuſion, to infringe every duty I owe to my maſters and benefactors? Are you aſhamed of your humble condition, of your father's poverty?'

'My father,' ſaid Fanny, with folded hands, and floods of tears, 'heaven is my witneſs, how much I love and honour you.' 'If you love, then, child, you will overcome that tenderneſs, which to you may be a ſource of miſery, and, perhaps, of endleſs ſhame. We will part for ſome time. You ſhall go to your aunt Harris, who lives about ten miles from hence; and there you will remain concealed 'till my Lord leaves this place, and returns to town, where he will forget you.' 'Alas! would my Lord forget me? 'Go, my dear Fanny, you know not the great; you imagine that they are like us country people. I lived for ſome time in town, and I know that their friendſhips are ſhort lived. Marry a man of your own rank if you would be loved by your husband, and make your family happy. To-morrow you ſhall go: I

will tell your mother that your aunt has ſent for you, and I ſhall pre-acquaint her with the affair. Go and prepare for your journey.'

This was a thunderſtroke to Fanny. Her father left her alone. It was then ſhe felt the whole force, the whole influence of love. She ſat down, or rather fell upon her chair, her head ſupported by her hands, and her heart heaving as if it would burſt. 'Shall I no more ſee my Lord—be driven from him—ſcorn his tenderneſs—refuſe to make him or myſelf happy—break my heart—how, how can I bear it?—O my father! what is it you require of me? Can I have fortitude enough to obey you, to drag myſelf into exile, into my grave?—Yes, my aunt will receive my laſt ſighs. Ah, Lord Whatley, Lord Whatley!'

Fanny paſſed a miſerable night. Adams had ſagacity enough to ſee into the heart of his daughter, and to perceive the cauſe of her agitation. He loved her tenderly, and thought he ſhould give her a proof of his affection, by obviating the effects of the young nobleman's paſſion. The moment is fixed for the fatal departure. No body about the farm knew whither Fanny was going, except only her mother, who partook of her daughter's diſtreſs, when ſhe beheld her labouring under thoſe afflicting ſenſations, which ſhe, in vain, endeavoured to conceal.

Fanny, in preparing for her journey, often ſighed. She met one of the young men belonging to the farm, who had a great regard for her; and ſhe was afraid every moment of being ſurprized by her father. 'Tell him,' ſaid ſhe, 'my dear Williams, that I ſhall never forget him, and that I am very unhappy.' 'Pray, Miſs, to whom ſhall I carry this meſſage?' 'Did I not tell you, my friend?' —to my Lord, who loves me, and who would be glad to marry me, but my father is againſt it.'—A moment after —'No, my friend, ſaid ſhe, 'tell him nothing; I ſhould offend my parents, I ſhould tranſgreſs my duty. Poſſibly, one day, he will hear that I am dead, and then he will—

While this poor girl was torn by conflictive ſentiments, Adams appeared. 'Come, child, take leave of your mother, your brothers and ſiſters, and let us go. I will attend you myſelf, and do you take care to keep every thing a ſecret.

What did not poor Fanny feel at this moment? She quitted the Scenes where ſhe had ſpent her happy childhood, the ſcenes where ſhe had drawn her firſt breath,

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and which received her laſt ſighs. She caſt her tearful eyes on the ſeat of Whatley; ſhe was a victim that was dragged to receive the mortal blow. At this inſtant a ſervant arrives from his Lordſhip with a meſſage, deſiring to ſpeak with Adams, that moment, his Lordſhip being confined to his bed, and very ill. 'Ill!' cried Fanny, and her heart was then in new agitations.

Adams haſted to the ſeat of his lord; he actually found him in bed, and in a high fever. Whatley gave orders he ſhould be left alone with his tenant. 'Sit down, my dear Adams,' ſaid he, with a feeble voice; 'you ſee the effects of your conduct.' 'How, my Lord?'—'Yes, Adams, you obſtinately refuſed me your Fanny; you will ſoon ſet me free from my future ſolicitations: I am ſenſible that what I ſuffer from this diſappointment will bring me to the grave. 'Ah! my Lord,' replied the old man, 'you pierce me to the ſoul! Can I be the occaſion of your death, who would lay down my life for you a thouſand times, But, my Lord, be judge yourſelf of what was my duty on this occaſion. Is my daughter a match for you? This paſſion will go off. Your preſent infatuation will vaniſh.' 'No, Adams, no; I ſhall never ceaſe to love your charming daughter.'

The good old man diſtracted with a thouſand different ſenſations, cried out, 'But, my Lord, what will your family, the town, and the whole world ſay?' 'My friend, I will marry Fanny privately, and declare my marriage after the death of my uncle, who is on the brink of the grave. By this means you will compleat my happineſs, that of your daughter, and your family.'

Honeſt Adams was confounded; he ſighed; he caſt his eyes on the ground. Whatley called his ſervants: They raiſe and dreſs him. He gets into the coach with Adams, and drives to the farm.

To Fanny every thing appeared like the illuſion of a dream, when Lord Whatley addreſſed her with preſſing tenderneſs—'Beautiful Fanny, it is yours to confirm that conſent which muſt be the joy of my life.'

She ſuffered him to take her hand. Whatley, at length, read his triumph in her ingenuous aſpect. The parents of the worthy girl once more made the ſtrongeſt remonſtrances; their paſſionate Lord ſtill found means to ſet them all aſide; 'till after many conflicts, denials, tears, and entreaties, it was at length determined, that his Lordſhip

ſhip ſhould privately marry Fanny. He flies to his friends. Sir Thomas Ward had arrived ſome days before. My Lord, after Supper, when the ſervants were gone, and the glaſs went round, informs the company of his intention to marry Fanny. Sir Thomas received the intelligence with indignation; and the poor Lord underwent the ſevereſt raillery, the moſt humiliating ſarcaſms. But finding him fully reſolved, 'my friend,' ſaid Ward, 'then I expect your thanks for an expedient which will at once reconcile your honour, your pleaſure, and your rank; which will neither render you obnoxious to your uncle, to your own reflections, nor to the reproaches of the world. Depend upon me for the intire management of this affair.' 'what is it you propoſe?' ſaid Whatley, 'Do not you mean to marry Fanny?' 'Moſt certainly.'—'Well! there is a clergyman in this neighbourhood, who will oblige me in any thing; we ſhall alſo be able to find manageable witneſſes. In ſhort, my friend, you ſhall be married, and you ſhall not be married; but ſufficiently, at leaſt, as to enjoy the object of your paſſions.' 'What,' be a traitor to my Fanny!' and he roſe from his ſeat with indignation.

Without enlarging on the defence of Whatley, the attacks of his friends, and above all, thoſe of the depraved Baronet, who employed all his wit to draw this young Lord into the moſt attrocious of crimes; be it ſufficient to obſerve, that their attempts were ſucceſsful. The treacherous Ward was the principal agent in this horrid plot, and every thing was prepared for the intended marriage. Whatley ſtung by remorſe, was frequently on the brink of defeating the infernal ſcheme; but Ward, inſpired by his genius for villainy, as often overbore his intentions. Behold our young Lord, then, in the arms of his beautiful, his innocent angel! Behold him in the raptures of thoſe pure, thoſe high ſet pleaſures, which alone ſhould be the fruits of unviolated virtue, yet here they were the portion of guilt.

Whatley, in the midſt of theſe charms, ſunk under the influence of a heart-felt poiſon. Fanny had never left her father's houſe; her huſband was the idol of her ſoul. She was that tender Eve whom Milton has deſcribed, ſo gently ſubmiſſive to the pleaſure of Adam. But what were the pangs of Whatley, when his eyes

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were fixed on that adorable creature, ſo touching, ſo ingenuous, ſo innocent in the very lap of pleaſure, and yet ſo wronged.

His uncle ſent for him to town. Fanny muſt now be left, though now more than ever beloved. The tender creature was with difficulty torn from the arms of her huſband. It was in thoſe trying moments that Whatley felt all the vengeance of injured truth and honour.

Ward at length carries him off, and ſteals him from thoſe reflections that weighed down his heart. Fanny fainted away in the boſom of her mother, when her eyes could no longer perceive her Lord. He, was now in the chaiſe with the Baronet who exerte all his wicked art to ſtifle that remorſe which perſecuted and purſued him to London.

Whatley arrived in town, was hurried by his friend into thoſe companies where the delicacy of ſentiment is deſtroyed; and every ſucceeding day he thought of Fanny, with leſs ſenſibility, and ſome feature of her image vaniſhed from his mind.

Sir Thomas had communicated, in confidence to Lord Darnton, this adventure of his nephew; and it was in concert with this nobleman that he endeavoured to draw Whatley into that round of diſſipation.

Whatley found leſs frequent opportunities to write to Fanny. He received her letters with leſs ardour. In a word, his love was abated, ſince he had beheld, with ſome emotion, the growing beauties of Miſs Barry, the daughter of Lord Ravenſtone. This impreſſion, ſo favourable to the deſigns of Lord Darnton, was immediately communicated to him. He concerted with the father of that Lady the proper means of drawing Whatley into an attachment; he propoſed to his nephew to marry Lord Ravenſtone's daughter. Every thing, added he, is already ſettled; you are beloved by the Lady, and nothing is wanting but your conſent. She is one of the greateſt and moſt

brilliant

brilliant matches in England. Whatley changes countenance, throws himſelf at the feet of his uncle, declares with tears his ſituation, his engagements to Fanny. Lord Darnton embraces and careſſes his nephew, anſwers him with diſſembled kindneſs; and employs every art to dazzle and overcome his integrity; but he remains inflexible. Rage and menaces ſucceed; he drives him from his preſence, and the poor Lord flies for refuge to the ſerpent Ward; who more inſinuating, more dangerous, conducts him back to his uncle. In ſhort, after many tumults, many conflicts, Fanny is ſacrificed, and the weak, the guilty Whatley marries Miſs Barry. The cruel Lord Darnton took upon him to convey the fatal news to the daughter of Adams. He had promiſed his nephew to ſettle ſuch an income on her, as ſhould be, to uſe his own expreſſion, a ſufficient conſolation for her diſapointment. The crafty uncle, however, was not ſatisfied with this Triumph. He was ſtill afraid Fanny ſhould recover her former influence; and therefore got Whatley nominated to one of the remoteſt foreign courts. Our young Lord ſet off with his new-married Lady, accompanied by Sir Thomas Ward, who never left him a moment to his own reflections, and who was always flattering him on his dignities and diſtinctions, the poor recompence of forfeited innocence and faithful love.

The anxieties, the painful penſiveneſs of Fanny increaſed. Already ſome weeks were paſſed ſince ſhe had heard from Whatley. She could no longer reſiſt the moſt cruel ſuſpicions. In vain was ſhe comforted by her father and the reſt of the family. How could ſhe avoid being alarmed at the ſilence of the man ſhe adored? She counted the days, the hours, the minutes ſhe had to waſte in tears, till the time appointed for her Lord's return ſhould arrive. An expreſs arrives from Lord Darnton, with a letter to Adams. The good old man received the meſſenger with his uſual politeneſs, deſired him to ſit down, took the fatal pa-

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Paper, and read as follows:

I ſhall not, Mr. Adams, treat you with a tone of authority on this occaſion. I ſpare you thoſe reproaches which your indiſcretion might deſerve; and I am willing to think your paternal fondneſs may have blinded you. You ought to have underſtood that your daughter was a very unfit match for my nephew; you muſt, therefore, give up all pretenſions on that head. Incloſed you will find a note for a thouſand pounds. Let Lord Whatley's folly be out of all future queſtion, if you would not offend.

DARNTON.

The poor old man had no ſooner read this letter, than he fell ſenſeleſs to the ground. He was alone; his wife and his daughter came in and raiſed him. By the application of cordials he recovered his ſenſes; he ſaw his daughter, and was ſeized with a trembling. 'Ah, my deareſt child! come my poor Fanny, come into my arms.' 'My dear father, what is the cauſe of this? Why this diſtreſs? theſe tears? This agitation? my father!' 'My child, we are undone, our fears were but too juſt. Lord Darnton, Hah! What?—is determined to diſannul your marriage, and has the inhumanity to inſult you with an offer of money. My Lord will not own you as his wife!' Not his wife! What then ſhould I be?' Fanny was juſt able to pronounce theſe words before ſhe fainted away. She was carried to her chamber, where ſhe continued in a kind of ſtupefaction.

'Take back,' ſaid the indigent old man to the meſſenger, 'take back your odious favours,' I am a poor man, 'tis true; but my Lord ſhall not rob me of my honour. It is my natural inheritance: I hold it from heaven, and no man on earth, not the king himſelf, ſhall ever deprive me of it. My Lord may act the ruffian to my children, and murder their father, but

he ſhall never oblige us to give up our rights, nor will we ever conſent to the diſſolution of the marriage. I will drag my wretched age to the feet of Lord Darnton. Let him throw me into priſon. I will take my trial. The rights of juſtice are above nobility; and an honeſt man, who has always behaved as a faithful ſervant to his Lord, will not be injured with impunity.' 'What is it you mean!' interrupted the meſſenger, who could not forbear to weep with theſe honeſt people? 'On what are your complaints founded? The marriage of Lord Whatley will not be anulled.' 'What marriage do you ſpeak of?' 'Do not you know that Lord Darnton's nephew is married to Lord Ravenſtone's daughter?' 'Married! My Lord Whatley!—with any body but Fanny!' 'Yes, and he is gone abroad.' O heavens!' cried Adams, in the utmoſt agonies, 'and has he then made a jeſt of the moſt ſacred ties? Can my Lord have any other wife but Fanny? Come, I will go to London, I will have juſtice or death; Lord Darnton cannot refuſe it.

He went into his daughter's chamber, who was juſt opening her eyes. 'Child, you do not know all our wrongs, nor all the treachery of Lord Whatley—He is married.' 'Married! 'Yes, married to another woman. But take courage, we have yet honour and juſtice left us. I am going to London, and at my return, expect better news.' 'Can Lord Darnton be ſuch a ſavage that nothing can ſoften him?' My dear child (and he preſſed her to his heart) you ſhall find a father in me.'

The ſituation of Fanny admits of no deſcription: The departure of Lord Whatley was more intolerable than all the reſt. Adams after taking a tender and ſorrowful leave of his wife and children, ſet off for London, accompanied by the meſſenger of Lord Darnton.

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When Fanny awaked from her ſleep of ſtupifying ſorrow, with feeble and dying accents ſhe cried, 'But could you betray me? Could you offer to another that tenderneſs you had ſworn to me? Are you really married a ſecond time? Have you another wife? Barbarous man! Could you go? Are you gone? Gone, and left me to diſgrace, and ſhame, and death. I am no longer your Fanny. But why, my Lord? Ah! why? Was it your fortune, your rank, that I loved? You read in my heart, that heart which you have now torn in pieces. You knew that I adored nothing but yourſelf.' Her agitations once more overcame her; never, ſure, did this wretched world produce a more pitiable object.

Lord Darnton's meſſenger entered his houſe, followed by the unfortunate old man. No ſooner did his Lord ſee him, than he aſked him concerning the event of his meſſage. He gave him, for anſwer, the thouſand pound note. 'What!' cried his Lordſhip, had he the impudence to refuſe my favour? 'He is here,' replied the ſervant. 'Let him come in,' ſaid my Lord, in wrath; 'I know how to treat people of his ſtamp.' Adams entered, and threw himſelf at his Lordſhip's feet. 'Yes, my Lord,' ſaid the unhappy father, with floods of tears, 'I refuſed the price of my diſgrace, becauſe my honour is not to be purchaſed, I am ſenſible that I am a dependant of your family, and that reſpect and ſubmiſſion are my duty. I did every thing in my power to prevent, my Lord, your nephew, from ſo diſproportionable a match; but he would not liſten to me: he was determined to poſſeſs my daughter, but he previouſly married her. Our fate is in your hands, my Lord, but the knot has been tied in the face of heaven, and it is heaven alone that can diſſolve it. Our only misfortune is my humble condition, and my poverty; my family has ever been irreproachable. Would you, my Lord, deprive a father, a mother, and a daughter of their lives, poor unhappy people, that eſteem their honeſty their greateſt bleſſing? Let me embrace your knees, and look upon a miſerable father, that appeals to your humanity and your juſtice.' 'To do you juſtice,' replied his Lordſhip, 'I ſhould drive you this moment out of my houſe. How could you have the impudence to refuſe my favour? Though you had an hundred daughters, you inſolent old man, a thouſand pounds would be too great a price for

them. Hear me—Do not abuſe my kindneſs—Take back the bill—Go; and do not think of ſeeing me any more.'

'No,' ſaid the courageous Adams, with that noble indignation which raiſes the ſpirit above all rank, 'I will not go. I only aſk for juſtice, my Lord, and I will have it. You ſhall either this moment run me through the body, or I will have recourſe to every court of juſtice in London. I will petition his majeſty: I will lay before him my grievances, my diſtreſſes, my and rights. I am,' proceeded the honeſt man, with all the eloquence of anguiſh, 'I am a poor farmer; but, my Lord, I am a father, and an injured father. My complaints will be heard; they will be ecchoed from every heart, and the world will pronounce between us. I have reaſon and juſtice on my ſide. My grief diſtracts me, my Lord!—No—I never can think that Lord Whatley has formed any other connexions—This is only a pretence to try my integrity. Ah! my Lord! once more behold at your feet an unhappy father, who will never quit this poſture till he moves your compaſſion. You cannot be capable of an action ſo unworthy your rank.' 'Come,' ſaid Lord Darnton, 'I will give you two thouſand pounds, and let me hear no more of you or your daughter.' 'My Lord, you will not hear me; your ſecond propoſal, I preſume to ſay, is a freſh attack on my life and honour. You ſhall take that life, my Lord; you ſhall embrue your hands in my blood; I will return no more to my daughter.' 'Inſolent man! do you threaten me?'—'I will die, or obtain your conſent to a marriage that will not diſcredit you. Fanny was a girl of virtue. My Lord, expect the utmoſt from my diſtraction; it is very dreadful.' 'Do you threaten me, you audacious earth-worm? Know the inſignificancy of your pretenſions. I perceive on what your obſtinacy and your haughtineſs are founded: you imagine that your daughter was legally married to my fooliſh nephew. I would have owed to your compliance and your duty, what I ſhall obtain by law. Know then that your claims are a jeſt, that your daughter has been the inſtrument of Whatley's pleaſures; in ſhort, that the marriage you have the preſumption to inſiſt on, was nothing more than a ſtratagem to obtain what was, certainly, never worth two thouſand pounds.' What! My daughter not married to Lord Whatley!' 'She never

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was, ſhe has only been his miſtreſs, my friend, and I think in that inſtance his Lordſhip, my nephew did you no little honour.'

A thunderſtroke could not have ſmitten poor Adams more violently. He fell ſenſeleſs to the ground. Lord Darnton went out of the room, and coldly ordered his people to take the poor man to the air till he ſhould come himſelf, and then to pay him two thouſand pounds. There was a ſcene that might have moved the heart of a ſavage. The poor old man lay extended on the floor, his grey hairs ſoiled with duſt and tears—He hardly breathed, and the paleneſs of death was on his countenance. A ſervant, who had more humanity than his maſter, was moved with compaſſion for the unfortunate man; he took him by the arm, and endeavoured to recover him. Adams opened his eyes, and with bitter exclamations, threw himſelf again on the floor, crying 'They have deceived my daughter; ſhe is not married. O my God! my God!' He roſe haſtily, and was going to ſeek Lord Darnton, but his ſtrength failed him; he was obliged to ſit down, and could do nothing but vent his anguiſh in a torrent of tears. The compaſſionate domeſtick endeavoured to comfort him; he exhorted him to be reconciled to his misfortunes, repreſented the quality and power of Lord Darnton, and concluded, with relating to him all the circumſtances of Whatley's pretended marriage with Fanny. Adams in diſtraction, tore his hair, and talked of ſtabbing Lord Darnton. The ſteward brought him two thouſand pounds ready told. Adams daſhed them from him with all the rage of honeſt indignation. 'Wretch! Let your maſter keep his infamous wealth! Go, he has already more than ſufficiently inſulted my grey hairs—I ſee that I have no other protector, nor other avenger than my God—I implore his aſſiſtance; and he will puniſh the villains that have deceived my child, my poor Fanny. Ah! my friend, continued he, addreſſing himſelf to the charitable domeſtick that took him by the hand, and would have ſoothed him, 'if you knew what a woman they have injured!—Ah! my poor children!—How ſhall I bear to tell you this dreadful ſtory!—I find I ſhall die in this place—Here my body ſhall lie, and call down the divine vengeance. The ſupreme juſtice can redreſs the meaneſt of his creatures, and he will not refuſe his ſuccour.

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The worthy father was diſtracted with grief—He would throw himſelf, he ſaid, at the feet of the King; he would purſue Whatley; he would petition the houſe of Lords. The ſervant, by degrees, brought him to a ſenſe of his ſituation, told him that every extremity, even death itſelf, would be vain, and repreſented to him the authority of the great, who always trample on the rights of the poor with impunity. At length he drew him to a little diſtance from Lord Darnton's houſe, and conveyed him to the lodgings of his wife. She received the unhappy Adams with that humanity peculiar to thoſe whom the inſolence of grandeur and fortune has denominated the meaner ſort of people, a humanity which is certainly preferable to the ſuperficial and heartleſs politeneſs of the ſplendid and the gay.

The ſituation of Adams is not to be deſcribed; his general exclamations were, 'My dear Fanny! My poor daughter! Child of my heart! How have they diſhonoured thee? Thee! to whom honour was more precious than life!—Ah! why did not the traytor Whatley rather ſacrifice you in the boſom of your father?' Then the poor man would weep, as if his ſoul would waſte itſelf in tears.

The generous domeſtic, ſtill more moved at his ſufferings, pretends ſickneſs that he might continue with Adams, who had the ſpirit to write to Lord Darnton, filled, (to uſe an expreſſion of Statius) with all the majeſty of grief. It will be no way ſurpriſing to hear a farmer talk in this ſtrain, when it is remembered that Adams had a liberal education. Beſides, a virtuous mind calls forth its powers, is elevated and exalted, acquires a kind of conſcious dignity and ſuperiority in thoſe circumſtances which ſtrongly affect its intereſts. It is obſervable, that men have acted prodigies of valour, firmneſs, and eloquence, when they were excited by the great emotions of nature, the only ſource of ſhining deeds and diſtinguiſhed talents. The old man's letter was conceived in the following terms:

Barbarous man! it is before the throne of everlaſting juſtice that I ſummon you, and you ſhall there take your trial. You have brought diſgrace and ſhame into the laſt paths of my life. To recompence the labours of an old ſervant, who has eat his morſel of bread with the honeſt ſweat of his brow, you have brought diſtraction into his heart, and betrayed the honour of

his child even in his own boſom.—But know, unthinking man, that heaven will call you to a ſtrict account for thoſe tears, and that blood which now drops from me. Your execrable nephew—I have already ſummoned him to the tribunal of God, that tribunal which is not to be corrupted—He will give us vengeance, He will give us vengeance. You will one day ſuffer remorſe for your abominable crime, but it will be too late; your wretched victims will be in the grave, their voices ſhall pierce the ſky.—You have diſgraced my old age—You have ſunk under a load of infamy a man, a whole family that ſerved, loved you, and grew under the ſhadow of your protection—You have trod upon weakneſs and innocence. I give up to you and your perfidious nephew, the farm and the property entruſted to me. May hell open with all its horrors, to ſwallow you both! We will go to bathe with our tears ſome other place, to give up our torn hearts to miſery and anguiſh, and there loſe our laſt ſighs. May this letter urge to your heart every painful arrow you have ſunk in mine! A man reduced to extremities as I am, is above all fear—Diſpatch us quickly—For that is the crime you will add to thoſe you have already committed. It will undoubtedly be leſs horrible, and it is all that Adams is willing to owe you.

The afflicted father left London, loading it with imprecations. His diſtraction increaſed, and broke out anew when he approached his own houſe. He beheld it with groans of anguiſh, and cried—'There is the aſylum of my poverty—There did I bring up my unfortunate daughter in innocence and virtue, but oh! to involve us in everlaſting ſhame! Ah! how ſhall I ſee my family! How ſhall I go to plunge theſe daggers in their hearts! Could I have believed that my laſt days would have been thus covered with diſgrace?

The domeſtic, his faithful attendant, ſupported him, and he dragged himſelf towards the farm. His wife and daughter came out to meet him: It was with difficulty Fanny could ſupport herſelf as ſhe walked. She was ready to expire—She made an effort to throw herſelf into the arms of her father, crying 'O my father!'—Adams claſped her to his breaſt—He would have ſpoke.—Fanny ſaw his diſtreſs, and therein read her fate. 'I am not Lord Whatley's wife; I have nothing to do but to die.' They ſate down. Adams, as well as his anguiſh would give him leave, related the barbarous manner in which he had been

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received by Lord Darnton. When he came to the horrid treachery of Whatley; to the pretended marriage; 'Hah!' cried Fanny, 'am I then deceived? Am I not his wife?'—Scarce had ſhe ſpoken theſe words, when ſhe fell to the ground, as if ſhe had been ſmitten with a thunderſtroke. Lord Darnton's domeſtic was extremely affected at this ſhocking ſcene---Fanny was conveyed to her bed, which ſhe had not left, but to drag herſelf to meet her father. Adams ceaſed not to embrace and weep over her---At length ſhe recovers her ſenſes---'But is it, ſaid ſhe, 'Lord Whatley who has deceived, betrayed' me?---Ought I to have expected ſuch a blow?' As ſoon as the unfortunate woman aroſe, ſo to expreſs it, out of the arms of death, ſhe ſeemed to be animated with ſuperior ſtrength; ſhe ſeemed by ſome miracle, to have obtained another heart. She raiſed herſelf upon her arm. Her features that had been dejected by languor began to be animated. She ſeemed to command her tears to ceaſe---'Come, my father,'ſaid the majeſtic beauty,'let us forget even the name of the villain who meant to diſhoner me, My ho-'nour is ſtill the property of my heart---It is he---it is 'the execrable traitor who has forfeited his own. He 'has abuſed the moſt ſacred ties---He has deceived me--'He has robbed me of the innocence of my ſoul. Can I 'be criminal in your eyes, in the eyes of God? Since I 'have nothing now to hope for in life, how eaſy were it 'for me to die?---But I will live for your conſolation, 'your ſupport. You and my mother ſhall be the whole 'world to me. Let us fly from this deteſted farm, this 'ſcene of guilt and horror!—Let us go, where Lord 'Whatley, where even his idea ſhall not follow me' (and at thoſe words ſhe wept) 'Let not even his name be pronounced among us!—We will——we will forget him——————I will tear him from my heart. My tender father ——I amwilling to ſubmit to the moſt toilſome labours, the moſt humble employments, to any thing provided you will be careful of your life—Provided you will love your Fanny—who is not a guilty creature.—At thoſe words her fortitude gave way to a freſh flow of tears. At length the unhappy family leaves the fatal place.—But Fanny forſakes it not without ſometimes turning her eyes towards it, without ſome regretful looks—She ſeemed to leave in that place the moſt ſenſible part of her faculties, the moſt

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lively principle of her ſoul. Under the influence of that aſſumed fortitude, love had not loſt his force. That Fanny, ſo magnanimous, poſſibly wept the more in ſecret. Virtuous minds are always moſt ſuſceptible of the great paſſions. Thoſe unfortunate people went to the houſe of the Miniſter, their relation, who had ſuperintended the education of Fanny. The domeſtic who had accompanied Adams from London, returned thither; but diſdaining to ſerve a man of Lord Darnton's principles, he deſired his diſmiſſion.

Lord Whatley, though married to a charming woman, in the boſom of pleaſures and honours, and ſurrounded with the pomp of dignity, was far from taſting any true happineſs. His Lady had all the airs of a woman of quality; behaving with a diſguſtful coldneſs to her huſband, and courting the attention of others in the genuine ſpirit of coquetry; ſhe was handſome, vain, and haughty—Yet that haughtineſs was not ſo ſevere as to ſave her from many ſcandalous adventures, the report of which came to the ears of her Lord. He would have urged his affection, but was not heard: he threatened her wirh the authority of an injured huſband, but his threats were anſwered by the moſt glaring indecorums. The daughter of Lord Ravenſtone was ſupported by a great name, and a powerful intereſt at court. Whatley was therefore obliged to put up with his affronts—The conduct of his Lady many times brought to his remembrance his poor Fanny, who loved, who adored him, and whom he had diſhonoured at the expence of the pureſt and tendereſt love. But this image that aroſe in his mind was ſoon deſtroyed by the induſtry of the Baronet—He hurried him round a circle of continual diſſipation—He plunged him into every debauchery of heart and mind, and while he was repelling the remembrance of Fanny, he was extinguiſhing by the ſame means, the natural ſentiments of honour and virtue.

Some years paſſed while Whatley continued in this death of reaſon, and honeſt ſenſibility. He returned to London with his wife, who did not fail to torment him with the moſt cruel chagrins. She diſhonoured him by her continual intrigues, embroiled him with her relations, and rendered him contemptible in the eyes of the court. Yet in theſe mortifying circumſtances, he had one conſolation. His Lady died, leaving him debts, enemies, inſult, and

ſhame. It was then that Whatley gave himſelf up to the moſt boundleſs diſſipation: there was not a noted tavern in London, where he was not the diſtinguiſhed hero of libertiniſm, and Sir Thomas Ward partook of his reputation. They went, by accident, with ſome other friends, to Brown's coffee-houſe—The converſation of the company turned on the ſubject of honour, a ſubject ſo trite, and yet ſo new—'But why Gentlemen, do you make this your ſubject?' ſaid a perſon who was a ſtranger to them, but whoſe years, and ſimplicity of appearance rendered him reſpectable; 'why do not you talk of matters with which you are better acquainted? —Of horſe-races and faſhions?'—'What do you mean, interrupted Whatley, briſkly?'—'That you are a very unfit perſon to diſcuſs the ſubject of honour'—'How! know I not what honour is?' 'You!—There are very few people that know what it is' —'Inſolent!'—'I am not inſolent—I only ſpeak the truth' —Immediately ſome perſon enquires for this ſingular man, and draws him out of the coffee-houſe, the reſt of the company remained in aſtoniſhment.

'Gentlemen,' cried Lord Whatley, 'you may be very ſure I know what I ought to do upon this occaſion, and I ſhall ſoon convince you whether I have a right to be called a man of honour.' He went out along with Ward, who heightened his reſentment. They made enquiry after this man—The next day, early in the morning, Whatley goes to the houſe where this man had an ordinary lodging. He knocks at the door.—The ſtranger, who had no ſervant, opened it, ſaying, 'my Lord, I did not expect you ſo ſoon. By your leave I will go to bed again'--'Expect me! Then did you expect me?' 'Certainly'—'I am glad to find you did me that juſtice; but in the firſt place, ſir, who are you?' 'Who am I? a man'—'What is your title?' 'My heart, and the love of truth.' 'Do you know who I am?' 'They call you a Lord, and I ſuppoſe you are one, for you reſemble the reſt of the fraternity—But neither you, nor they, I repeat it, have any right to talk of honour'—'You inſult me, and I expect ſatisfaction; whoever you be, you ſhall take your chance with me'--'you then think you have a right to take away my life, or ſacrifice your own—Imprudent young man!'—'What familiar inſolence!' Do not you imagine that I owe you reſpect?—'I will convince you of it'--'What by running me through

through the body? You ſuppoſe that fortune will favour you—If, in effect it ſhould, and if I ſhould have time to expreſs my ſentiments, do not look for reſpect, but rather contempt, perhaps pity'—'Contempt! —Your pity!—Get out of bed, friend, this moment; and let this diſpute be ended on the one ſide or the other. How audaciouſly this impudent fellow treats me.' 'I am not impudent, and I ſhall get up immediately.' The ſtranger riſes, and dreſſes himſelf with great tranquility, while Lord Whatley walked backwards and forwards in the chamber in the utmoſt agitations. 'Come,' ſays he, 'let us go behind Hyde Park, and there I ſhall make you know what it is to offend a man of my rank'—'A man of your rank ought to ſupport his ſuperiority by probity and virtue; without thoſe diſtinctions, he is on a level with the loweſt plebian. What do I ſay?—His is not comparable to the latter, if he acts his humble part honeſtly.' Whatley ſtormed with anger. Scarce were they arrived on the ſpot, when his Lordſhip drew, and called upon his antagoniſt to do the ſame. 'One word by your leave. It is againſt my will that I fight. This acknowledgement may appear ſingular; you may deem me a coward, a poltroon, but I am neither the one nor the other: When you ſhall know my name, you ſhall do me juſtice. Duelling is an infamous thing: it is contrary to all laws both divine and human, and is nothing elſe but aſſaſſination. But I ſhall comply with your deſire, and, as you are determined to have it ſo, ſhall do myſelf the honour to cut a throat with you. I have only one thing to deſire.' 'What is that?' I have offended you by ſaying you had no notion of honour: before we fight, do me the favour to tell me what you mean by the word honour, and try to do it calmly.' 'I believe this man is mad'—'No, I am not mad. What is that honour? Tell me what idea you have formed of it?

Lord Whatley made uſe of all thoſe definitions which are ſo well known, and ſo ill founded. 'Have you done, my Lord?'---'Yes'---'You ſeem to be very little acquainted with your ſubject, and perhaps, you forget the principal parts of it—Does not honour conſiſt in keeping one's word!' 'Without diſpute'—And the weaker, and more defenceleſs the perſon is to whom that word is given, the more ſacred a man of honour ſhould hold his faith. Is it not, in ſhort, the rankeſt, the moſt degrading vileneſs

to break it, to betray it in ſuch an inſtance, and to ſnatch by treachery the rewards of truth? Would you, my Lord, make a purchaſe by falſe or forged bills?' At thoſe words, Whatley ſtormed with indignation. 'Forged bills!'—But you, my Lord, you have been guilty of an action a thouſand times more baſe'—'Draw ſir'—'Hear me, and as ſoon as I have explained myſelf, we will fight. Though I had a thouſand lives, and ſhould loſe them all by your hand, you would not be leſs culpable. Would you not forge a bill?—Barbarous man! What did you when you impoſed on innocence, love, and truth; when yielding to the dictates of your vile accomplices, under pretext of the moſt ſacred and moſt ſolemn oaths, you diſhonoured an unhappy creature, who received you into the arms of innocence, under the ſanction of the altar?—What did you, when tearing in pieces the pureſt and tendereſt heart, your conduct was followed by death and ruin—when you brought an aged father to the grave with ſhame? Thoſe unfortunate people that were honoured with the name of your dependents, who conſidered the boſom of their Lord as an aſylum; whom you ought to have protected.—And was it you that ſacrificed them?—You underſtand me; truth, love, and innocence betrayed; your heart, yes, your heart itſelf, my Lord, if you dare look into it, all theſe will riſe againſt you—You ſeem diſturbed'—Ah! (ſaid Lord Whatley, and a tear roſe in his eye)—Too true!—I have acted diſhonourably; and this is what honour calls upon me to do'—Upon this he threw down his ſword—'Embrace me generous ſtranger; you open my eyes, you bring me to myſelf'—Then flying into his arms—'Ah! tell me, tell me, (ſaid he) what is become of Fanny?—Yes, I am indeed a wretch, the vileſt of criminals!'—'This, my Lord, is honour, it returns to my heart, and I acknowledge the man—Fanny and her family live in bitterneſs and miſery—They have taken refuge with a relation, who ſupports them in their deplorable circumſtances, and the unfortunate Fanny ſtill loves you.' 'Loves me,' interrupted Whatley, with tears; 'ſtill loves me!—Ah! let me ſee her, let me throw myſelf at her feet—Will you have the goodneſs to conduct me?'

Ward, who had followed his friend at a diſtance, runs up to him, and finds him in tears...' Come on, ſir.' ſaid Whatley; ' behold the triumph of ſentiment!... Yes, I acknowledge myſelf culpable, and this gentleman had a right to tell me that I could not with propriety talk of honour: he has opened my eyes, my friend, and I fly to repair the injuries I have done.' Whatley explained the circumſtances of this adventure. Ward was outrageous, reproached him with meanneſs of ſpirit, and draws upon the worthy man who had brought him back to virtue.... The ſtranger tries, by the ſtrongeſt remonſtrances, to evade fighting with the enraged Baronet; but, at laſt, being conſtrained to it, he cries, ' it was you wretched Ward, who corrupted the virtuous Whatley: You oblige me to the crime either of ſacrificing your life, or my own: Neither my words, nor my tears, for I bluſh not to weep, have any effect upon you: Take then the conſequence, or may my death ſoften your rigid heart, and bring you to repentance.--- Whatley would have parted them, but Ward would not hear him. They fight. The ſtranger diſarms him, and gives him back his ſword, ſaying, ' live, and enjoy the privilege of repentance.' Whatley made new efforts to appeaſe his friend: But he fell with greater fury on his generous adverſary, and at laſt received a mortal thruſt that laid him on the ground. The ſtranger immediately took him by the arm, aſſiſted by Whatley, who bathed his friend with his tears. The conqueror gave himſelf up to the moſt piercing grief. O Heaven, (ſaid he, with groans) that I ſhould be guilty of ſuch a crime! That I ſhould ſhed human blood, the blood of a fellow creature!' ' Ah! my Lord. (continued he to Whatley) I partake in your diſtreſs—Sir Thomas Ward has involved me in this guilt, I ought, rather to have let him run me through the heart: I never ſhall ſurvive this,' Whatley's ſervants came and took away the body of Ward, while

his

his Lordſhip and the ſtranger returned to town in the ſame carriage, ſtruck with the deepeſt concern and melancholy. The people in the neighbourhood who had been preſent at the combat, all depoſed in favour of the conqueror. Whatley having recovered from his firſt emotions of grief, diſcovered at length that the perſon who had killed the Baronet, was an officer of birth, and diſtinguiſhed for his merit and his bravery. He had retired from ſervice, and lived like a true philoſopher, that is, like a man who had the ſupport of honour and virtue at heart, He employed the greateſt part of his fortune in the relief of indigence—He avoided ſplendour, and lived under the protective and pleaſing ſhade of his own integrity. His name was Windham. Whatley flew to his apartment, whom he no ſooner perceived then he cried,' Ah! my Lord! I ſhall ſoon follow my unhappy victim to the grave—I cannot bear to think of this event, to think that I have deprived a man of his life! I ought to have evaded a circumſtance ſo horrible. Fatal prejudice! How long ſhall it triumph over reaſon! Is it thus a man ſerves his country?—How nearly does ſuch virtue border on a crime!'

This worthy man was pierced with grief and melancholy, nevertheleſs, he recovers the health that he apprehended he ſhould no longer enjoy. Whatley, while he bewailed the fate of his friend was obliged to own that he alone had been to blame, and that he had obliged Windham to come to extremities. He was no leſs ready to acknowledge that the Baronet had been the cauſe of all his irregularities, that he had led him into that ſhameful treachery, the diſgrace of his life—In one word, that he had been the occaſion of all Fanny's ſufferings. Theſe reflections rendered the memory of Sir Thomas leſs dear to his friend.

Windham informed his Lordſhip of the cruel behaviout of Lord Darnton, with regard to the unfortunate Adams. What a deſcription for Whatley! His ſoul had recovered all its honeſty, all its ſenſibility Windham was a kind of ſuperior being, who reſcued him from that gulph of depravity into which Ward had plunged him; and Whatley wiſhed for nothing but the moment that ſhould reſtore him to his Fanny, the only wife of his heart.

Windham related ſuch circumſtances as ſtill heightened his impatience to ſee her. That worthy man, in travelling over the different counties of England, had beed led by accident, to the houſe of that clergyman with whom Fanny and her family had taken refuge. It was from themſelves he learnt their misfortunes, and the perfidious behaviour of Lord Whatley. Windham with pleaſure, indulged his impatience; and they took their way to the village where the clergyman lived.

Whatley already felt the happineſs of repairing his injuries, and at length they arrived. But what a ſhock to the penitent Lord! They found the clergyman dead; and the place where Adams and his family had retired was unknown. It was only obſerved, that wherever they were, they muſt be very miſerable. 'This,' cried Lord Whatley, 'is what I have done—I am the cauſe why theſe unfortunate people, perhaps, are now no more—It is I who have murdered the moſt adorable of women. Let us go no further, my generous friend! Here I will die—Here where my Fanny has wept and reproached me—No, angelic creature! You never could love me after ſuch enormities; my conduct is deteſtable even in my own eyes.' 'Let us go, my Lord,' ſaid Windham, let us not idly give up our ſearches here—Why ſhould we diſtruſt the goodneſs of heaven? It is that which has opened your eyes—Let us believe that we are under the direction

of

of providence, and that your Fanny will be reſtored to your arms, that you may make reſtitution for all the injuries you have done to her and her relations—Virtue has its reward ſometimes even in this world.' Thus he encouraged the deſpairing Whatley—They purſued their journey, and made the moſt diligent enquiries.

Windham himſelf at length began to deſpair of ſucceſs, and the unhappy Lord was in the greateſt diſtreſs. They were on horſeback, and unattended, when they met a Baronet of Windham's acquaintance? he ſtopped a little to talk with him, and Whatley rode forward.

A child was weeping in the road—The poor innocent appeared to be about ſix or ſeven years of age—It had an air of delicacy which was touching, under the diſadvantages of a poor dreſs. Its tears, its native comelineſs, greatly moved his Lordſhip. He looked upon the child with pity and could not draw his eyes from it. 'What makes you weep, my little dear,' ſaid he? 'My poor mamma! She told me ſhe ſhould die ſoon, and ſhe wept when ſhe kiſſed me—Mamma is very unhappy—We have nothing to live upon—Mamma cries, and grand papa is ſick in bed.' Thus the child, with mingled tears and ſighs, uttered its little complaints. 'Poor child! But your father, my dear'—Oh! Sir, I never ſaw my papa—It is my papa that has made us all unhappy—Mamma often talks of him. She ſays ſhe loves him, and ſhall love him as long as ſhe lives—Though, to be ſure, he has given her a great deal of trouble—She makes me pray to God for him every day—Poor papa is in a very bad way,' added the child, weeping as if its little heart would break.

Lord Whatley was affected, and lighting from his horſe, ran towards the child, who did not ſeek to ſhun him, but ſtretched out its arms to embrace him. 'Embrace me my little angel? you are a ſweet child. And what are your parents?' 'They work in the field' —Your mother too? 'She is always the firſt to go to work, Sir, though ſhe has not much ſtrength—She takes care of my grand papa—I wiſh I were rich that I could help my poor mamma, ſhe is ſo very good'— 'And where do you live, my dear child?' Below there, Sir!' ſhewing him a wretched cottage. 'Will you go with me to your mamma?—'Oh! ſhe would chide me, Sir!—My mamma ſees nobody, 'Fear not,' ſaid his Lordſhip, ſtill embracing the child, 'I will make your excuſe'—The child heſitated, looked at him, and gave him its hand—He took it in one of his, and with the other held his horſe's bridle. Windham followed him at a diſtance. He went along with the child, who conducted him to a poor hut covered with thatch, and ſurrounded by a miſerable hedge. A few paces from the cottage he ſaw a woman ſitting on the ſide of a ditch with a mattock in her hand, and ſeemingly oppreſſed with fatigue and melancholy—The child goes up to her—'pray, mamma, do not chide me for bringing this Gentleman, who wanted to ſee you'—She looked up—Whatley fell at her feet——'My dear Fanny!'——'My Lord Whatley!'—She fainted away. Her child threw itſelf into her arms; and at the ſame moment Windham came up—Whatley firſt recovered—'My dear Fanny! It is you!' O my friend! I have found the miſtreſs of my heart—My excellent, my only love, ſee me at your feet! Lift up your eyes! Behold your lover! your huſband! who repents from his ſoul! My dear Fanny, to what a condition have I reduced you!'

Whatley was proſtrate at her feet, which he preſſed to his lips and bathed w.h his tears. Fanny recovers from her ſwoon, and falling into his boſom, 'is it you ſaid ſhe, my Lord Whatley? 'Yes, my adorable love, it is your huſband, who repenting of all his follies and vices, returns to virtue in your embraces, and to that tenderneſs which now poſſeſſes his ſoul, and makes him die to repair your injuries!'—'My Lord, have you embraced your child? ſaid Fanny tenderly---'Go, my dear, and embrace your father' —My child! O God! My child! This perfectly overcame him—He careſſed Fanny and her child by turns, and preſſed them to his boſom—'Yes, my Lord,' continued Fanny, 'it is your child—The fruit of our unhappy love——I have brought him up to love you, that when he ſurvived me, he might tell you of his unfortunate mother: for had you come a few days later, you would not have ſeen me here—I ſhould have left a letter in his hands, and might have flattered myſelf'—Here ſhe could proceed no farther—Her ſwelling boſom would not give her utterance, and Whatley took her again into his arms—'Ah! tell me not of my crimes! I am ſeverely puniſhed for them—I feel it at my ſoul—But oh! Could I then reduce to ſuch a condition the moſt amiable, the moſt valuable of women? May I, my deareſt life—May I by every inſtance of Love and tenderneſs, prevail on you to forget my barbarity, my treachery—My undeſerved treachery?'—Then he ſpoke—And wept upon her hand as he preſſed it to his mouth. 'I ſhall not pretend to excuſe myſelf by telling you that Ward led me into this ſcene of villainy. I would appear to you a criminal as I really am, that I may owe every thing to your generoſity and your tenderneſs. Forgive me, forgive the man who ſhall eſteem it an honour to be your huſband, and that of father to this amiable

able child' (preſſing it again to his heart.) 'But where is your father?' 'My father?, May I ſee him? 'He is in his bed,' anſwered Fanny expiring with ſickneſs and ſorrow; for ſorrow has preyed upon him ſtill more than want'—'Want!' ſaid Whatley, 'O God—My heart will break. Ah! worthy Windham! What a wretch have I been! Yes, my poor Fanny, it is I who have reduced you to theſe extremities—And—What is that I ſee? The bread we live upon—The bread that is earned by our toil, and ſteeped in our tears'—It was a coarſe brown loaf. Whatley could ſcarce ſupport himſelf at the ſight. He raiſed his hands to heaven, and in broken accents cried, 'What my dear, my virtuous creature, was this your food—While I —O my God! My God! I ſhall die! I cannot ſurvive theſe horrid thoughts'—Ah, my Lord! What charms in this repentance for your Fanny? Live, that ſhe may yet adore you: She never ceaſed to love you,' and (embracing him) 'could ſhe hate you?'—Yes, you ſhall be my wife, my ſovereign miſtreſs. London has been witneſs to my irregularities, it ſhall behold my reformation; I can never make my acknowledgments to you ſufficiently diſtinguiſhed—Yes, you ſhall be the wife of my heart—Come—Let me throw myſelf at the feet of my worthy father.

Fanny deſired him to wait till ſhe had acquainted him with his arrival. She feared the ſudden ſight of her Lord might be fatal to the languiſhing old man. She did not know how to teſtify her gratitude to Windham. Lord Whatley had told her in a few words, all that the worthy man had done to bring him back to a ſenſe of truth and honour. Fanny flew to her father —'My dear father,' ſaid ſhe, take comfort—I have good news to tell you—Lord Whatley is come—He acknowledges his faults'. —'And will he own you for his wife? Shall I

have the conſolation before I die?' 'Yes, worthy Adams, cried his Lordſhip, running to embrace the old man, you ſee your daughter's huſband, your ſon, who comes to bewail his faults in your boſom, and would give his life to repair them.' Adams, overcome with ſurprize and joy, could only utter —'Ah my Lord!'—The tears flowed from his eyes; he would have got up, and attempted at ſome expreſſions of reſpect—'Lie ſtill, my father,' ſaid Whatley, it is my duty to do you honour and reſpect—I have injured you; I have betrayed my faith, and virtue, and Fanny—I am ready to make ſatisfaction for every thing—I humbly aſk pardon of you, of your dear daughter, of humanity itſelf, which I have wounded through the heart of the worthy Adams. Yes, you ſhall be my father, and your daughter ſhall be my wife, the only miſtreſs of my ſoul.' He then enquired of Fanny concerning her mother—'Alas!' replied the old man, 'ſhe is no more! She adored her daughter.' 'Ah! I underſtand you—This is my doing! Wretched and guilty Whatley, how ſhalt thou expiate thy crimes? Ah, my father! Ah, my Fanny!

Situations like theſe admit of no adequate deſcription; but the heart may feel, and the mind may conceive, what the pen never can paint.

Our poor cottagers went to dinner; how did their extreme indigence then pierce the ſoul of Whatley! Scarce had they a ſufficiency of that coarſe bread, the very ſight of which had ſtruck him with horror.—The dying Adams was another object that might have ſmitten the heart of barbarity itſelf.—Every thing that appeared in this manſion of miſery, was a dagger in the breaſt of this penitent Lord. But when his looks were fixed

on

that woman whom he adored; when he read in her pale countenance the cruel impreſſions of pain and poverty, and ſaw thoſe arms, that were locked in his with ſo much tenderneſs, faded and emaciated, he was torn with that remorſe, thoſe torments of the ſoul, which are ten thouſand times more acute than any external torture. Every inſtant, he cried with tears that bled from the heart—'My virtuous Fanny! To what miſery have I reduced you! And is it poſſible that you can ſtill love me?' Fanny, embracing him, anſwered, 'Yes, my Lord! —You were always dear to me; and you ſhould have pierced me to the heart, if you would have permitted me to have kiſſed your hand.'

If there is a ſcene in this world that can attract the eye of the ſupreme Being, it is, undoubtedly, that of ſincere repentance, of pure and honeſt love, the triumph of ſentiment and reaſon.

Lord Whatley learnt that Fanny's two ſiſters had not long ſurvived their mother; that her brothers obliged, by their misfortunes, to leave their father's houſe, were in the ſervice of farmers; that ſhe and her father, after the death of the clergyman, their relation, being reduced to extreme indigence, tilled with their own hands a piece of ground where they had built a kind of ſhed to live in, and that this had been ſcarcely ſufficient for the ſupport of their miſerable lives. Fanny loved her Lord too much to afflict him with a detail of ſuch circumſtances: He learnt them from Windham.

Whatley removed Adams to his own ſeat, where the old man ſoon recovered his health. A very elegant apartment was prepared for Fanny, who a few days after their arrival, dreſſed in a magnificent

ficent ſuit, was married to her Lord. It is needleſs to add, that Windham was one of the principal aſſiſtants on this feſtive occaſion. Lord Whatley agreeably ſurprized Adams, by preſenting to him his two ſons, dreſſed in a manner becoming their change of fortune. I was willing, my dear father, ſaid he, to make all our family happy. The brothers of Fanny ought to be mine, and it is my intention that they ſhall partake of my happineſs.

In the evening, when Whatley had diſmiſſed his attendants he threw himſelf at the feet of Lady Whatley, and, at laſt, ſaid he, 'My excellent Fanny, you will embrace an huſband, whoſe only ſtudy will be to make you forget your ſufferings. Will you pardon me all the injuries, all the wrongs I have done you? My dear, my adorable wife! Your misfortunes have not robbed you of your beauty; it will bloom afreſh when cheriſhed by my kiſſes, and watered by my tears. I ſee the effect of my own conduct, and you are more dear to me. You have been my victim, you ſhall be my ſovereign, be all that is dear to me, with the lovely child that pleads for its father's pardon. Let it not plead in vain, my dear Fanny!'—She could only anſwer with tears of pleaſure, the ſtrong, though inarticulate expreſſions of the ſoul, and overpowered by the intoxicating tenderneſs, ſhe ſunk into his arms. O charm! inexpreſſible of pure and tender attachments! Pleaſures of love! What are you without thoſe of virtue.

Windham was about to take leave of Whatley. 'What! Sir,' ſaid his Lordſhip, 'will you refuſe to reap the fruits of your labour? And what ſcenes can

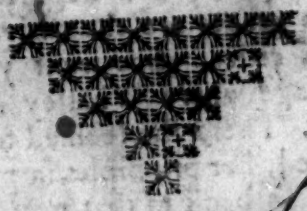
can you find more intereſting than theſe? You have united two hearts, my dear friend, that know how to be grateful for favours you have done them —Enjoy the pleaſure of beholding the effects of your kindneſs—You have reſtored me to virtue, to Fanny, and to happineſs; but can that happineſs be perfect, if you add not the pleaſures of friendſhip to thoſe of love?' Windham embraced his friend with thoſe tears that ſpring from the heart. 'Well, my dear children, I accept your offer —It will be ſome conſolation to my old age to find that there are yet on earth ſenſible and virtuous ſouls.' They removed to London, where Fanny proved herſelf the moſt charming and moſt amiable of women. She was a model for thoſe who had long ſhone in the circle of diſtinguiſhed life, and ſhewed, by her beauty and deportment, that the virtues and the graces are the natives of villages, rather than of cities. She went yearly to viſit that poor cottage where Whatley and Windham had found her. There ſhe ſeemed to find her virtues ſtrengthened, her principles improved. Scenes of poverty call us back to that modeſty, and that ſubdued frame of mind, which are the beſt ſupport of virtue.

Whatley deſpiſed, diſhonoured, chagrined by his marriage with Lord Ravenſtone's daughter, was indebted, in ſome meaſure, for a ſecond exiſtence to the daughter of the farmer. Led by the tender influences of chaſte love, he returned to the duties of a man, a citizen, and a ſubject: He entered once more into the ſervice he had quitted, diſtinguiſhed himſelf, and obtained the moſt honourable appointments. Lord Darnton himſelf made a kind of public ſatisfaction to Adams and

Fanny

Fanny; he declared Whatley his heir, and died in the arms of his niece. Heaven, as a recompence to Adams, prolonged his life to an advanced and happy old age; and Fanny had several children, the delight and ornament of their family and their country.

THE END.



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